

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 LONDON 01799 01 OF 02 022258Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 ACDA-12 HA-05
/091 W

-----016137 022303Z /65/13

O R 021155Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2703
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 01799

(CORRECTED COPY - CAPE TOWN OMITTED FROM
LIST OF INFO ADDRESSEES)

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PDEV, RH
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: ARTICLE ON FRENCH UNIT IN
RHODESIAN FORCES

1. FOLLOWING "SPECIAL" ARTICLE BY THE DIPLOMATIC
STAFF APPEARED IN THE FEBRUARY 1 EDITION OF "THE
GUARDIAN."

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 LONDON 01799 01 OF 02 022258Z

2. BEGIN TEXT:
FOREIGN LEGION MEN IN SMITH'S WAR
BY OUR DIPLOMATIC STAFF
ONE HUNDRED FORMER MEMBERS OF THE FRENCH FOREIGN LEGION
ARE BELIEVED TO BE FIGHTING AS A SPECIAL COMBAT UNIT
WITHIN THE RHODESIAN ARMY.

THE MEN ARE PAID STANDARD RHODESIAN ARMY RATES WITH AN ADDED BONUS CREDITED TO FOREIGN BANK ACCOUNTS. THE RHODESIAN GOVERNMENT WHILE ADMITTING TO THE RECRUITMENT OF FOREIGN NATIONALS, HAS ALWAYS ARGUED THAT SUCH VOLUNTEERS HAVE BEEN INTEGRATED WITH THE REGULAR ARMY ON LOCAL RATES OF PAY AND THEREFORE CANNOT BE DESCRIBED AS MERCENARIES.

ACCORDING TO DIPLOMATIC SOURCES, THE 100 FORMER LEGIONNAIRES UNDER THE COMMAND OF TWO MAJORS ARRIVED IN SALISBURY THREE MONTHS AGO AND WERE FORMED INTO A SEPARATE UNIT OF THE RHODESIA LIGHT INFANTRY, A SPECIALISED FRONT-LINE COMMANDO FORCE.

ANOTHER 200 TO 300 FORMER LEGIONNAIRES ARE EXPECTED TO JOIN THEIR COLLEAGUES. INTELLIGENCE SOURCES REPORT THAT FIVE FORMER LEGIONNAIRES HAVE BEEN KILLED AND SEVERAL MORE WOUNDED SINCE THE UNIT FIRST WENT INTO ACTION AGAINST NATIONALIST GUERRILLAS LATE LAST YEAR.

WHILE THERE WAS NO OFFICIAL CONFIRMATION IN PARIS LAST NIGHT OF ANY FRENCH DEATHS AMONG RHODESIAN TROOPS, IT IS WELL KNOWN THAT FRENCH MERCENARIES FOR RHODESIA HAVE BEEN RECRUITED FROM A BASE AT LYONS.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 LONDON 01799 01 OF 02 022258Z

ADVERTISEMENTS GIVING A BOX NUMBER BUT NO CLEAR INDICATION OF THE TYPE OF JOB HAVE BEEN APPEARING IN FRENCH NEWSPAPERS FOR ABOUT A YEAR. THE RECRUITING TEAMS ARE REPORTED TO INCLUDE FRENCHMEN WHO FOUGHT IN THE FORMER BELGIAN CONGO, OTHER PARTS OF AFRICA AND THE LEBANON. THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT HAS NEVER TRIED TO STOP THE RECRUITING OF MERCENARIES DESPITE ATTACKS BY THE LEFT-WING PRESS.

THE EX-LEGIONNAIRES, MOST ALL FRENCH-SPEAKING, ARE SAID TO HAVE BEEN RECRUITED IN LYONS IN THE MIDDLE OF LAST YEAR. THEY WERE FIRST BASED AT BINDURA, A SMALL TOWN NORTH-EAST OF THE RHODESIAN CAPITAL WHICH SERVES AS THE HEADQUARTERS FOR THE "OPERATION HURRICANE" AREA.

SINCE THEN THE UNIT, WHICH REPORTEDLY OPERATES ALMOST IN ISOLATION FROM RHODESIAN REGULARS, IS UNDERSTOOD TO HAVE BEEN MOVED TO MOUNT DARWIN, AN IMPORTANT POLICE AND MILITARY BASE IN THE NORTH-EAST REGION.

DEATHS IN ACTION HAVE NOT BEEN REPORTED BY THE RHODESIAN

MILITARY, ALTHOUGH THOSE OF SEVERAL "FOREIGN ENLISTED TROOPS," AS THE GOVERNMENT TERMS THEM, HAVE BEEN LISTED IN THE "KILLED ON ACTIVE SERVICE" COLUMNS OF THE RHODESIAN PRESS.

CONSIDERABLE SECRECY HAS SURROUNDED THE OPERATION OF THE LEGIONNAIRES IN RHODESIA. THE TROOPS ALLEGEDLY

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 LONDON 01799 02 OF 02 022305Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-07
L-03 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 HA-05 ACDA-12 /091 W
-----016237 022313Z /65

O R 021155Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2704
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 01799

(CORRECTED COPY - CAPE TOWN OMITTED FROM LIST
OF INFO ADDRESSEES)

REFUSED TO REMOVE THEIR DARK GLASSES FOR ARMY IDENTIFICATION PICTURES. EVEN ON LEAVE IN SALISBURY, THEY HAVE KEPT TO THEMSELVES.

THE RHODESIAN GOVERNMENT HAS NEVER MADE ANY SECRET OF THE FACT THAT MANY FOREIGN NATIONALS, PARTICULARLY BRITISH, AMERICANS, AND AUSTRALIANS, HAVE ENLISTED

IN THE COUNTRY BUT HAS DENIED USING MERCENARIES. THE
REPORTED EXISTENCE OF A FRENCH LEGION UNIT OPERATING
ON ITS OWN AT SPECIAL RATES OF PAY, ALTHOUGH WITHIN
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 LONDON 01799 02 OF 02 022305Z

THE COMMAND STRUCTURE, CHALLENGES THIS ASSERTION.

FAMED FOR THEIR FEROCITY AND WILLINGNESS TO TAKE
CASUALTIES, THE LEGIONNAIRES WOULD HARDLY SEEM SUITABLE
COMBAT MATERIAL IN THE ELUSIVE GAME OF "HIDE, SEEK AND
KILL" THAT CHARACTERISES THE CONFLICT BETWEEN GOVERN-
MENT AND INSURGENT FORCES IN RHODESIA. HOWEVER, THE
MILITARY IN SALISBURY ARE THOUGHT TO HAVE EXCELLENT
RECRUITING CONTACTS THROUGHOUT EUROPE AND AMERICA
AND ARE SAID TO HAVE BEEN USING SUCH A NETWORK TO
RESOLVE THE ARMY'S MANPOWER PROBLEM.

THE USE OF EX-LEGIONNAIRES IN THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING
TERRITORY RAISES THE PROBLEM OF LANGUAGE. BUT GIVEN
THEIR SEGREGATED STATUS AND FRONT LINE ROLE IN THE
WAR, THE FORMER FRENCH UNIT MEMBERS ARE SAID TO HAVE
CREATED LITTLE PROBLEM FOR THE RHODESIAN MILITARY.
END TEXT

BREWSTER

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TEXT, PRESS COMMENTS, INTERVENTION, MILITARY PERSONNEL
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LONDON01799
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780072-0139, D780050-0047
Format: TEL
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197802101/aaaadhtx.tel
Line Count: 199
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: b6d1cdcc-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 feb 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3431679
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RHODESIA: ARTICLE ON FRENCH UNIT IN RHODESIAN FORCES
TAGS: PDEV, SOPN, RH, FR, THE GUARDIAN
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b6d1cdcc-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014